

**Jane Lownes, One of the First Caucasian Settlers of  
Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania,  
(Now Delaware County),  
and Her Cave Dwelling in Which She Called Home**

By:  
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If you are a resident in Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, or live near the area, then you have likely heard the story of Jane Lownes aka the “Pioneer Mother of Springfield,” who came to the New World as a widow and made it through the harsh Pennsylvania winter while living in a cave with her children. You may have wondered where the cave was, and if it still exists. You may have hiked the Springfield Trail, endlessly searching for natural rock formations that may have once been an appropriate cave dwelling. You may have wondered if her cave was located within Jane Lownes Park, Martin Forest, or more within the confinements of Smedley Park. Coming up short of a find, you may have eventually concluded that the story may not be real at all, and the cave never existed. Well, the nearly 340-year-old story of Jane and her cave is real, but not in the context one would think. So, what really is Jane’s story, and where is her cave?

### JANE’S ORIGIN AND HER FAMILY

Jane Lownes (nee Stretch) was amongst the first Caucasian settlers to be granted land in Springfield Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania, in the latter part of the 17th century; in fact, she was the first woman to be granted land in the entire township. Jane was born in England circa 1638, assuming she was at least 20 years old at the time of her marriage. On 2 DEC 1658, Jane married Hugh Lownes in Leek Parish, Cheshire, England (Jordan 1911, 962).<sup>1</sup> The marriage record is thought to be filed in non-Conformist records in London. The known children of Jane and Hugh were James, George, Joseph, and Hannah Lownes.<sup>2</sup> Most women of Jane’s era had 10 children each, so Jane likely had other children, besides the 4 known children, that probably succumbed to disease in infancy or early childhood and died young. Being that Jane and Hugh were married in 1658, their children were likely born between 1659-1675. Jane, Hugh, and their children were Quakers. It is said that Jane and Hugh suffered religious persecution for their beliefs, and Hugh was jailed in England. Jane may have also been jailed. It is also said that Hugh Lownes was well acquainted with William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. Oral traditions concerning Hugh’s fate vary; some say he died in jail in England, while others say he fell sick while in jail and never recovered, and then died at sea while en route to the New World with Jane and their children.

### JANE OBTAINS LAND

On 10 NOV 1682, 150 acres of land was surveyed to Jane, in the area of present-day Springfield Township, Delaware County (then Chester County), Pennsylvania, from Crum Creek

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Jordan, ed., *Colonial Families of Philadelphia* (New York, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1911), 2: 962, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/210884-colonial-families-of-philadelphia-vol-2> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

in the west, to beyond present-day West Sproul Road to Woodland Avenue in the east.<sup>3</sup> It is said that Jane was later patented the land in 1685. Lownes Run, now known as Whiskey Run, is a tributary of Crum Creek that runs parallel and south of Jane's property line. Lownes Run was not on Jane's tract of land, but on an adjacent landowner's tract of land, by the name of Peter Lester. A friendly Indigenous American community called the Lenni Lenape lived along Lownes Run, just south to southwest of Jane's dwelling house and cave-site. Many years after Jane died, it is said that the last family of Indigenous Americans to have had a wigwam along Lownes Run lived directly south of Jane's dwelling home (present day St. Kevin's Rectory), and north of Joseph Gibbons' home (present day Springfield Mall), up to as late as the 1770s, and their names were Andrew, Isaac, Betty, and Nanny.<sup>4</sup> Jane's tract of land encompassed present day Springfield Hospital, Saint Kevin's Parish, certain parts of the Springfield Country Club's golf course, and certain parts of Smedley Park, Martin Forest, and the Springfield Trail. A transcription of the aforesaid 1682 copied survey to Jane, transcribed by this compiler, is as follows:

10 NOV 1682

*Layd out for Jane Loune 150 Acres of Land beginning at Petr. Lesters corner tree upon Crum Creek running 500 Perches and to Peter Lesters other corner tree from thence N 60 perches to a Red oke from thence SW\_W to a chesnut tree by Crum Creek from thence A Long the Creek side one several corses to the first bounder.*

*By mee Charles Ashcom*

*T.H.*

*R.L. let this be done free she is poor: & a purchase.*

*Jane Louns 150 acres on Crum Creek, Chester County.*

*Returned ye 31st of March 85.*

*Entered in folio ye 74th.*

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<sup>3</sup> Pennsylvania, Copied Survey Book D-74:119 & Reverse, assigned to Jane Loune, 10 NOV 1682; Copied Surveys, 1681-1912, RG-17, [series #17.114], digital images, *PHMC.Pa.gov* (<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/Book%20D-74%20pg%20239.pdf> : accessed 12 JUL 2021, <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/Book%20D-74%20pg%20240.pdf> : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Link to all pages in Vol. D-74, courtesy of *Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission*: <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bah/dam/rg/di/r17-114CopiedSurveyBooks/Books%20D1-D90/Book%20D74/r17-114%20BookD74%20Interface.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> George Smith, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Henry Ashmead, 1862), 391-392, 400, digital images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/historyofdelaw00smit> : mode/2up : 12 JUL 2021).

## JANE'S ARRIVAL TO THE NEW WORLD

Jane arrived upon the shores of the New World circa 1683, as a poor, recently widowed woman, probably in her mid 40s. Accompanying her were her 4 children, who were not little children, but young adults/teenagers. Her children's ages likely ranged between 13 to 23 years old. Oral tradition states the children were all over 16 years old. Jane and her children were amongst the many Quakers who left England and removed to Pennsylvania for religious freedom. Upon their arrival to Springfield, Jane and her children dug out and made a cave-home to live in as a temporary shelter, against the side of a hill, and lived there while they worked to build a small log cabin.<sup>5</sup> Jane's sons then built a bigger and better home of rock, which still stands today, and is now the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish on West Thomson Avenue, right off of West Sproul Road, in Springfield Township.<sup>6</sup> The cave-home was very close to the present day rectory.

Per Minutes record, Jane was in Chester County, Pennsylvania, (present day Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania), at least by 1684, and transcription (by this compiler) of the aforesaid record is as follows:<sup>7</sup>

*Att A Monthly Meeting att Chester ye 2nd of 2nd month 1684:*

*Laid down by Thomas Brasey for Jane Lownes ten shillings and all that he hath in his hands  
Layd downe in the Womens meeting being \_\_\_\_ Sterling mony for the Use of Jane Lowns.*

## JANE WAS A QUAKER, AND QUAKERS BUILT CAVE-HOMES

As aforementioned, Jane and her family were Quakers. Quakers began their arrival in America as far back as the mid-17th century. In 1681, King Charles the 2nd, who was the King of England, Ireland, and Scotland, set forth a considerable land grant in America to a wealthy English Quaker, of which the royal family owed debt, by the name of William Penn. William Penn went on to become the founder of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania was a safe haven for those who practiced Quakerism. While safe in Pennsylvania from religious persecution, life was not easy, as early Quakers did have to contend with the primitive landscape, which consisted of

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<sup>5</sup> Gilbert Cope and Henry Graham Ashmead, *Historic Homes and Institutions and Genealogical and Personal Memoirs of Chester and Delaware Counties, Pennsylvania*, (New York, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1904), 1:538, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/203997-historic-homes-and-institutions-and-genealogical-and-personal-memoirs-of-chester-and-delaware-counties-pennsylvania-v-1> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Springfield Historical Society, *Images of America: Springfield Township, Delaware County* (Portsmouth, Charleston, Chicago, San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2004), 15.

<sup>7</sup> "U.S., Quaker Meeting Records, 1681-1935," digital image s.v. "Jane Lownes, 1684," *Ancestry.com* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2189/images/31906\\_283952-00279](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/2189/images/31906_283952-00279) : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Original data: Swarthmore College; Swarthmore, Pennsylvania; Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Minutes. Title: Media Records, Chester Monthly Meeting, Men's Minutes, 1681-1721, 4.

Indigenous American trails as the only paths to travel upon; having to deal with dangers from bears and wolves; having to build modest shelters and exist in harsh climates; having to forage and hunt for food; and of course, there was always the threat of infection and disease. Other inhabitants in Pennsylvania, besides Indigenous Americans, were the Swedes and Forest Finns, who were involved in the North American Fur Trade. An early cabin, built by either the Swedes or Forest Finns circa 1640-1650, is located about 4 miles east of Jane Lownes' cave-home and dwelling house, and it still stands today along the Darby Creek, known as the “Lower Swedish Cabin.”<sup>8</sup>

The first Quakers in America took up residence all along the northeast coast, such as in the Provinces of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts Bay Colony. Massachusetts Bay Colony was not safe and of largely Puritan control, so most Quakers removed from that area and headed south. Early Quakers built “cave-homes” to live in as temporary shelters, while they worked to build bigger, better homes of tree logs or rocks. Early cave-homes have been largely referred to as “caves,” and this is where the confusion of Jane Lownes’ “cave” comes from, because when one hears the word “cave,” one thinks of a large, natural rock formation, and it appears that Jane’s “cave” was not natural, but man-made. In George Smith’s *History of Delaware County*, he wrote that the cave was “built” (Smith 1862, 480).<sup>9</sup> This indicates the cave was man-made. Jane’s cave was not yet filled in at the time that Dr. Smith’s book was published, so he would be of a more credible source than writers who succeeded him in the 20th century. In Charles Browning’s *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania*, he wrote that Jane’s cave was a “natural rock grotto,” but that was likely hearsay (Browning 1912, 315).<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere, in Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County, Province of West New Jersey, Quaker brothers Mordecai and Edward Andrews also built cave-homes as temporary shelters, circa 1699. They are another pair of early Quaker settlers with the same mixed up cave legend as Jane Lownes, where the story has been misconstrued that they lived in a natural rock cave, when it was, in fact, a man-made shelter, such as the one that Jane lived in. An author by the name of Leah Blackman wrote the only basic genealogy for the area that the Andrews brothers lived in, and she wrote that the Andrews cave was “dug in the ground like a cellar and walled with cedar logs and covered with hewn timber of the same material” (Blackman 1880, 256).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The Lower Swedish Cabin is located on Creek Road in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania. To access the trail from Springfield Township’s side, the trail entrance is towards the end of Indian Rock Park, on Rosemont Avenue, in between North Bishop Avenue and Bloomfield Avenue, along the Darby Creek. For further information, see the website provided by *Friends of the Swedish Cabin* (<https://swedishcabin.info/> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>9</sup> Smith, *History of Delaware County*, 480.

<sup>10</sup> Charles H. Browning, *Welsh Settlement of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: William J. Campbell, 1912), 315, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/572152-welsh-settlement-of-pennsylvania> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>11</sup> *Proceedings, Constitution, By-Laws, List of Members of the Surveyor’s Association of West New Jersey. With Historical and Biographical Sketches Relating to New Jersey* (Camden: Order

Quaker cave-homes were generally built into river bluffs or steep hills that had about a 30-degree angle. One wall of small tree logs would probably have been built into the part of the hill that headed downhill. A large rectangular or square area would be dug out in between the wall of logs and the part of the hill headed uphill. The area dug out would be about four feet deep or more. A chimney built of rocks and clay would have probably attached at the furthest end to provide heat and fire for cooking within the shelter, or a fire pit probably would have been built adjacent to the shelter with a hole dug through to connect. A tree would likely be near the shelter to help blow smoke away. The cave-homes were ground level, with only a small portion above ground, and the part of the roof that was above ground would have probably been covered with sod, sticks, and leaves. Basically, the shelter would be somewhat of a large Dakota fire hole, that was big enough to sleep in. To build the shelter, all one would need was a shovel, axe, pickaxe, and a little bit of blood, sweat, and tears.

Per *Minutes Book C*, commencing about the year of 1685, in concern with the Philadelphia region, William Penn ordered everyone out of the caves within two months' time, because the cave-homes were becoming brothels and places of overt intoxication.<sup>12</sup> This compiler has not found record of orders to stop using caves in the present day Delaware County region, but early settlers were probably eager to build better houses, and get out of their cave-homes, so that they no longer had to share such cramped living quarters amongst the earthworms, mice, and other little creatures that go bump in the night.

#### **THE LOCATION OF JANE'S CAVE-HOME, AND THE CAVE-SITE MARKER**

Jane's property stayed within the Lownes family for several generations. In 1789, Jane's descendants erected a marker at the site of the cave-home, and it bore an inscription towards the memory of Jane and her cave.<sup>13</sup> The marker was engraved as "Jane Lowne Cave Dwelling

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of the Society, 1880. Printer, S. Chew); article within by Leah Blackman, *History of Little Egg Harbor Township, Burlington County, NJ, from its First Settlement to the Present Time, Comprising the Genealogy of Many of its Inhabitants, Together with Short Biographies of Eminent Characters, and Most Events Worthy of Remembrance*, 256, digital images, FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/358985-proceedings-constitution-by-laws-list-of-members-etc-of-the-surveyors-association-of-west-new-jersey-with-historical-and-biographical-sketches-relating-to-new-jersey> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>12</sup> William Henry Egle, ed., *Minutes of the Board of Property of the Province of Pennsylvania*, (Harrisburg: E.K. Meyers, 1893), 1:10-20, digital images, FamilySearch.org, (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/100595-minutes-of-the-board-of-property-of-the-province-of-pennsylvania> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>13</sup> "Old Diary Indicates Cave Marker in Springfield Placed in 1789." *Chester Times*, Chester, 27 DEC 1956, 35, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1956/12-27/page-35/> : accessed 12 JUL 2021). Information of the marker placement was obtained from the 1789 diary

1685.”<sup>14</sup> The location of the cave-home and marker was very close to present day St. Kevin’s Rectory, and just south of it. St. Kevin’s Rectory is located at the very end of West Thomson Road, behind St. Kevin’s School, off West Sproul Road, in Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. All sources state the cave-home and marker were south of St. Kevin’s Rectory, but there is debate on how far south of St. Kevin’s Rectory they were located. Per Ashmead’s *History of Delaware County*, he wrote that the cave was located 100 yards south to southwest of the old mansion house (which is now St. Kevin’s Rectory), and that the inscription of the marker was engraved as, “Jane Lownes, her cave and dwelling, 1684” (Ashmead 1884, 714).<sup>15</sup> This is interesting, because this compiler has personally seen the marker, and that is close but not exact of what the marker is engraved as; thus, this proves that Ashmead never personally saw the marker, and his description of it being 100 yards southwest of present day St. Kevin’s Rectory was just hearsay. On the other hand, James Davis, former President of the Springfield Historical Society and former Curator of the Springfield Heritage Museum, did personally see the marker, as he used to run historic tours in Springfield to the site.<sup>16</sup> In an article in the *Delaware County Daily Times*, James told the newspaper that the actual site of the cave-home was filled in under the driveway leading to the home of Edward J. Walsh, about 400 yards off Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin’s Rectory (Skidmore 1964, 43).<sup>17</sup> This compiler has personally been to St. Kevin’s Rectory, and it is about 400 yards off Sproul Road, at the end of West Thomson Avenue. Edward J. Walsh’s home is now St. Kevin’s Rectory. West Thomson Avenue is the driveway that leads directly to the front door of the rectory, but if looking at the rectory, and to the left of it, the driveway also branches out to the side. By looking at aerial images, it appears that the part of the driveway that branches out to the side used to extend further out to other buildings south of St. Kevin’s Rectory that are no longer there; thus, the side driveway would now be under Springfield Hospital’s parking garage, or under the area of the

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of Elizabeth Drinker, in possession of the Springfield Heritage Museum, from her journal entry dated 20 JAN 1789.

<sup>14</sup> The cave-site marker is now located at the Springfield Township Building, Powell Road, Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and this compiler has personally seen it.

<sup>15</sup> Henry Graham Ashmead, *History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884. Facsimile Edition by Concord Township Historical Society, Chester: John Spencer, Inc., 1968), 714, digital images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/589126-history-of-delaware-county-pennsylvania> : accessed 12 JUL 2021).

<sup>16</sup> “Reviving Springfield’s History: Tour of Historical Spots to Be Held Tomorrow.” *Chester Times*, Chester, 2 DEC 1955, 14, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1955/12-02/page-14/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>17</sup> Arden Skidmore. “Springfield Museum Sentimental Holds Intimate History Out of Delco Past.” *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 FEB 1964, 43, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-22/page-43/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

ticket booth to get into the parking garage, and this was probably the part of the driveway that James Davis was referring to, so the exact location of the cave-home and marker was probably closer to St. Kevin's Rectory, and much less than 100 yards south of it, as to what Ashmead suggested. Either way, the site of the cave-home and marker would now be under land owned by Springfield Hospital, and probably under the parking garage area.

The cave-site marker is currently in the lobby of the Springfield Township Building on Powell Road. Hanging on the wall above the marker, is an original photo of the marker in the ground, before Edward J. Walsh had removed it and donated it to the Springfield Heritage Museum. The photo is just a picture of the marker, in the ground, surrounded by grass. Above that photo, is a framed writing someone had typed of some basic information of Jane, but it is inaccurate, as it says, "...Jane Lownes and her children were reported to have spent the winter in a limestone cave in the vicinity of where St. Kevin's rectory now stands." This is inaccurate because the cave was not a natural rock formation, but man-made. Also, there is no limestone on Jane's tract of land; in fact, there is no limestone in all of Delaware County.<sup>18</sup>

#### NEW OWNERSHIP OF JANE'S PROPERTY

During the 1940s, Edward J. Walsh, and Inez Cline Walsh, his wife, became in possession of the property formerly owned by Jane Lownes.<sup>19</sup> Edward and Inez moved into Jane's dwelling house, built circa 1685, which is now the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish. Edward J. Walsh was a prosperous builder and President of Marlyn Construction Company. He donated many of the parks in Springfield, including Walsh Park, which was named after him. The cave-home, at that time, was just an indentation in the ground, with only the erected marker to really identify its existence. Without the marker, one would not have known a "cave-home" was once located there.<sup>20</sup>

Edward J. Walsh and Inez Cline Walsh, his wife, of Springfield Township, were quitclaimed 100 acres, 3 rods, and 33/100 and 58/100 perches of land, more or less, on 13 OCT 1947, from Joseph H. Murray, and Margaret H., his wife, of Lower Merion, Montgomery

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<sup>18</sup> J.H. Barnes and W.D. Sevon, 2002, *The Geological Story of Pennsylvania* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.): Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 4<sup>th</sup> ser., Educational Series 4, 44, image 28: *Geologic Map of Pennsylvania*, digital image, *Water-Research.net* (<https://water-research.net/Waterlibrary/geologicdata/geology.pdf> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>19</sup> "Historic Site at Springfield." *Chester Times*, Chester, 3 SEP 1942, p. 7, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1942/09-03/page-7/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>20</sup> "Home School at Swarthmore." *Chester Times*, Chester, 14 APR 1931, p. 3, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1931/04-14/page-3/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

County, Pennsylvania, for the sum of \$1.00.<sup>21</sup> Within this deed, there is mention of former property owners and adjacent property owners, such as J. Howard Lewis, Frank R. Tobey, the heirs of Joseph Gibbons, John Ogden, the heirs of Oliver Holt, and the Springfield Water Company, etc. The deed mentions a survey made by Damon and Foster, Civil Engineers, dated 23 MAR 1938, so that may be when Edward J. Walsh was first surveyed the land, which is the process before the final patent or final transaction occurs. Unfortunately, the deed does not mention anything about the cave-home. This compiler has read through many land records of this area, from 1682 up to about 1980, in the hopes that at least one land record would have mentioned the cave-home, but it is not mentioned in any of the records. This does make sense, however, because the cave-home was within the property, and not along the border, and land records only really list measurements of property borders, and not the specific structures within, unless they are large buildings, generally speaking.

#### JANE'S CAVE HOME FILLED IN BY NEW PROPERTY OWNERS

In 1947, Edward J. Walsh began renovations of his new home. Jane's cave-home was filled in under his side driveway about that time. An aerial image from 1937, before Edward owned the property, shows structures that used to exist south of present-day St. Kevin's Rectory, and Jane's cave-home would have been in that area.<sup>22</sup> It appears a dirt path led from present day St. Kevin's Rectory to that area, and that was probably the part of the driveway that Edward had filled in. Edward J. Walsh donated the cave marker to the Springfield Heritage Museum shortly thereafter.

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<sup>21</sup> Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 1418:478-480, Murray to Walsh, 13 October 1947, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (<https://delcopa.gov> : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click “Public Access” < click “Recorder of Deeds System” < click “Login as Guest” < click “Accept” < click “Search Public Records” < click “Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948” < type “Walsh” in the box which says “Surname/Corporation” < click on any link to enter Volume 1418, then enter page 478, etc.

<sup>22</sup> 1937 aerial image, PASDA, Pennsylvania Imagery Navigator, *PSU.edu* (<http://maps.psiee.psu.edu/ImageryNavigator/> : accessed 12 JUL 2021). In order to view aerial images, one must enable FTP URLs from Google Chrome, by typing *chrome://flags* in the browser, and then changing the “default” option to “enabled,” which is next to “Enable Support for FTP URLs.”

On 13 MAR 1956, Edward J. Walsh sold his home and 11 acres of his land on West Thomson and West Sproul Roads to Father John J. McGovern for \$150,000.00.<sup>23</sup> Edward's home became the rectory for St. Kevin's Parish, and a school was built next to the rectory.<sup>24 25</sup>

On 21 OCT 1959, Edward J. Walsh and his wife, Inez Cline Walsh, sold the land south of St. Kevin's Rectory to Tri-County Hospital, Inc., for \$40,000.00, to build a hospital.<sup>26</sup> The hospital was built shortly thereafter, and it is now the present-day Springfield Hospital on West Sproul Road. Aerial images show that the parking lot, in the back of the hospital, was originally just an open lot to park in. The parking garage was not built on top of the parking lot until years later.

#### DESCENDANTS OF JANE DESCRIBE WHAT THE CAVE LOOKED LIKE

In 1973, Margaret Lownes Conover, a 76-year-old Quaker, and direct descendant of Jane Lownes, was interviewed for an article in the *Delaware County Daily Times*, and she discussed what Jane's "cave" looked like. Margaret said, "...it wasn't really a cave, but really a house built against a hill. In those days, it was called a cave. The front part of the house was level with the ground, and the rear part had no windows" (Reilly 1973, 14).<sup>27</sup> Margaret grew up in Springfield, and she was alive to see the cave-home before it was filled in under Edward J. Walsh's driveway. Margaret died shortly after the article was written, and she is buried in Springfield Friends Burial Ground, on Old Sproul and Springfield Roads, Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Also buried there is no other than Jane Lownes, herself. Affixed to the

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<sup>23</sup> Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 1816:176-177, Walsh to McGovern, 13 March 1956, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (<https://delcopa.gov> : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click "Public Access" < click "Recorder of Deeds System" < click "Login as Guest" < click "Accept" < click "Search Public Records" < click "Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948" < type "Walsh" in the box which says "Surname/Corporation" < click on any link to enter Volume 1816, then enter p. 176, etc.

<sup>24</sup> "Historic Site Selected for New Catholic Parish." *Chester Times*, Chester, 3 October 1955, 12, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1955/10-03/page-12/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>25</sup> "New School Will Have 8 Rooms." *Chester Times*, Chester, 23 March 1956, 19, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/chester-times/1956/03-23/page-19/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>26</sup> Delaware Co., PA, Deed Book 2009:274-281, Walsh to Tri-County Hospital, Inc., 21 October 1959, digital images, *DelcoPa.gov* (<https://delcopa.gov> : accessed 13 JUL 2021) < click "Public Access" < click "Recorder of Deeds System" < click "Login as Guest" < click "Accept" < click "Search Public Records" < click "Index to Deeds 1800 - 1948" < type "Walsh" in the box which says "Surname/Corporation" < click on any link to enter Volume 2009, then enter p. 274, etc.

<sup>27</sup> Linda Reilly. "Early Springfield Settler's Kin Talks of Earliest Days." *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 August 1973, 14, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1973/08-22/page-14/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

cemetery gate entrance, is a plaque dedicated to the memory of Jane.<sup>28</sup> The Springfield Friends Meeting House is on the same property adjacent to the burial ground, and in the front of the meeting house, and not in the burial ground, are buried runaway slaves (Skidmore 1964, 47).<sup>29</sup> Many Indigenous Americans are buried there, too, as other cemeteries would not take “non-whites” in (Reilly 1973, 14).<sup>30</sup> The rather small burial ground has been estimated to have approximately 5,000 people buried in it, 4 graves deep (Skidmore 1964, 47).<sup>31</sup>

In 1974, Joseph Lownes, a Springfield resident and direct descendant of Jane, who was in his mid 60s, was also interviewed in an article for the *Delaware County Daily Times*. Joseph said, “...the cave she lived in was on the side of the hill where Tri-County Hospital now stands. A way of identifying it was by an impression in the land and a marker placed on the site that said: Jane Lownes Cave Dwelling, 1685” (*Delaware County Daily Times* 1974, 21).<sup>32</sup> Tri-County Hospital is now Springfield Hospital, located on West Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin’s Rectory.

#### A SUMMARY OF JANE AND HER CAVE-HOME

As aforementioned, Jane Lownes and her family were Quakers that left England in search of religious freedom. Jane arrived in the New World as a middle-aged widow with older children, circa 1683. Jane was granted a tract of land in Springfield Township, Chester County (now Delaware County), Pennsylvania. Jane and her children built a cave-home to live in as a temporary shelter, while her sons worked to build a better home which still stands today, and it is now the rectory for St. Kevin’s Parish on West Thomson Road, built circa 1685. The cave-home

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<sup>28</sup> Jane Lownes, memorial plaque, Springfield Friends Burial Ground, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, digital images s.v. “Jane Lownes,” *FindaGrave.com* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/215157110/jane-lownes> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>29</sup> Arden Skidmore. “Springfield Group Almost Faded: 1 Family Attended Services, Meeting Now Has 102.” *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 29 FEB 1964, 47, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-29/page-47/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>30</sup> Linda Reilly. “Early Springfield Settler’s Kin Talks of Earliest Days.” *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 22 August 1973, 14, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1973/08-22/page-14/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>31</sup> Arden Skidmore. “Springfield Group Almost Faded: 1 Family Attended Services, Meeting Now Has 102.” *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 29 February 1964, 47, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1964/02-29/page-47/> : accessed 13 JUL 2021).

<sup>32</sup> “Lowneses Make Mark.” *Delaware County Daily Times*, Chester, 1 July 1974, 21, digital images, *NewspaperArchive.com* (<https://0-access-newspaperarchive-com.charlotte.delco.lib.pa.us/us/pennsylvania/chester/delaware-county-daily-times/1974/07-01/page-21/>.)

was mostly underground, with only a small portion above ground, and was located about 400 yards in from West Sproul Road, and south of St. Kevin's Rectory. Jane's property went through several landowners, and eventually Edward J. Walsh, a wealthy builder, ended up with the property. In 1947, he started renovations and filled the cave in under his side driveway. Edward donated the cave-site marker, erected in 1789 by Jane's descendants, to the Springfield Heritage Museum. The marker is now in the lobby of the Springfield Township Building on Powell Road. The site of the cave-home is now approximately underneath Springfield Hospital's parking garage. Jane's final resting spot is in Springfield Friends Meeting House and Burial Ground, along with many other early settlers of the area. While Jane's cave-home has been forever filled in, her story is certainly worthy to have been "dug up." Alas, this compiler would have preferred a different ending, and for the cave to have been a natural rock formation that still existed, but history is history, and that is that.

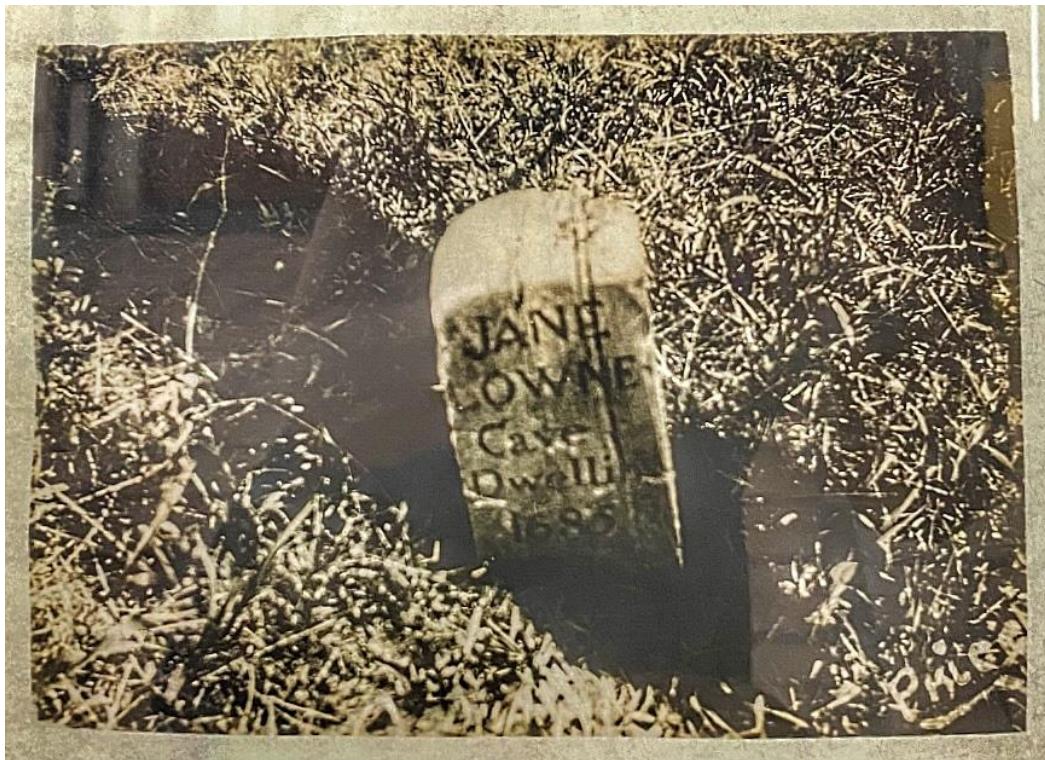


Photo taken by this compiler, of the original photo hanging in the township building.



Photo of the marker taken by this compiler. The marker is in the lobby of the Springfield Township Office building located on Powell Road, Springfield, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.